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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : Ambassy STOCKHOLM

617

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 21, 1951

REF : Embdespatch No. 051, February 9, 1951

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	EUR-5	IN RMIR-2 INR-7 P-3 741-1 247-1
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	3-24	CIA-15 241A-10 OSD-5 ARMY-4 NAVY-4 6TH-6 74A-4

SUBJECT: Press and Other Reaction in Sweden to Recent Soviet Trial in Tallin of Estonians Accused of Crimes During Nazi Occupation.

BEGIN SUMMARY

The recent Soviet trials in Tallin of three Estonians accused of having committed mass crimes during the Nazi occupation of Estonia have received considerable attention in the Swedish press and in refugee circles. There has been general recognition that one of the Soviet purposes in staging the trials has been to attempt to discredit Estonian leaders in exile and thus reduce their influence in reminding the free peoples of the Soviet occupation and domination of the Baltic countries. The discussion of the trial has also resulted in attention being given to various forms of Soviet propaganda directed at the Baltic refugees in Sweden.

END SUMMARY

The Stockholm press has devoted considerable attention to the recent trial by the Soviet authorities in Tallin of three Estonians accused by the Soviets of having committed gross crimes in Estonia during the occupation of the country by the Nazis from 1941-44. Swedish interest in the trial was doubtless heightened by the fact that Sweden is now the home of some 22,000 Estonian refugees (See Embassy Despatch under reference) and that Estonia lies directly across the Baltic from the Swedish capital. The accusations made at the trial against Estonian leaders in exile also naturally created considerable interest in Sweden.

On March 7, the day after the Tallin trial opened, the Swedish press reported that a white paper entitled, "The Masks Pulled Off," issued in connection with the trial revealed serious charges against Estonians in Sweden, accusing some of them of using Sweden as a base from which to engage in sabotage and espionage activities against the Soviet Union. The white paper was also reported to have listed the names of many Estonians living in exile in various countries, with particular reference to Sweden, and to have accused numbers of them of having committed major crimes against humanity during the Nazi occupation of Estonia. Semi-official Stockholms-Tidningen responded to these charges by observing that the Soviets were obviously attempting to throw a shadow upon Sweden for having given political asylum to the refugees, and added that the presence in Tallin of foreign correspondents from Moscow was evidence of the propaganda value in the world press which the Soviet authorities attached to the trial.

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Stockholms-Tidningen on March 9 and 11 printed two articles by one of its editors, Karl Olof HEDSTRÖM, giving the views of a leading Estonian exile in Sweden, Dr. Eerik LAID, Chairman of the Estonian National Foundation, on the Soviet objectives in staging the trial. (The full texts of translations of the articles are attached as Enclosures Nos. 1 and 2 to this Despatch.) Laid maintained that the Soviets clearly wished to discredit and reduce the influence of Baltic refugees abroad since they served as a constant reminder to the Western world of Soviet occupation of those countries. He also stated that the Soviets desired to consolidate their position in the Baltic states and to reduce as much as possible the flow of information between the captive peoples in those states and the free Baltic citizens abroad. Laid further maintained that the Communists in Sweden had compiled address lists of all Estonians in Sweden, which they would doubtless use for their own questionable purposes. When queried by Communist Ny Dag regarding this latter assertion, Laid replied, as reported in Ny Dag on March 13, "I have not talked about Swedish Communists, but about Communists in Sweden, and there is a considerable distinction between these two concepts."

Stockholms-Tidningen on March 10 printed as a letter to the editor a statement issued the previous day by leaders of the three leading Estonian refugee organizations in Sweden, condemning the trial and the Soviet purposes behind it. A translation of the text of the letter is attached as Enclosure No. 3 to this Despatch.

On March 14 a press conference was held in Stockholm under the auspices of "The Baltic Committee in Sweden" on the subject of the Tallin trial. Professor Birger NERMAN, Chairman of the Committee, stated that "the Soviet authorities are not the right ones for condemning political murderers as they have now done in Tallin. The main purpose of the trial was not to sentence the three prisoners, but to discredit the Estonian refugees in the free world." Nerman added: "It goes without saying that political murderers should be punished, but it should not be forgotten that the Communists as well as the Nazis are guilty of such cruel deeds. In the Baltic states alone the Communists have murdered thousands of people, and in the course of the years 535,000 Baltics have ^{been} deported to inhospitable places in Russia where many have died from hardship and over-exertion. Of these 535,000 unhappy persons 135,000 were Estonians, 170,000 Latvians and 230,000 Lithuanians." Nerman noted that one of the accused at the Tallin trial had been imprisoned since 1946, and he alleged that the Soviet purpose in holding the trial at the present time was to distract attention from various Communist failures, including that of agricultural production. After Nerman's statement there was a discussion of the apparently increasing Communist propaganda amongst the Baltic refugees in Sweden, it being noted that papers from the Soviet Union and East Germany were being distributed to the refugees. As an example of the false accusations made at the Tallin trial, it was pointed out that Aleksander WARMA, one of the exiled Estonian leaders accused of crimes in Estonia during the Nazi occupation, had actually been serving as Estonian Minister to Finland at the time and had therefore been absent from the country.

For the Charge d'Affaires ad interim:

William M. Owen
William M. Owen
Second Secretary of Embassy

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Enclosures:

1. Translation from Stockholms-Tidningen, March 9, 1961.
2. Translation from Stockholms-Tidningen, March 11, 1961.
3. Translation of text of letter, from Estonian leaders.

Department please pass copies to Amembassies Moscow and Helsinki, Amcongen
Munich (PRU) (2 copies) and Amcongen Göteborg.

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From Stockholm

Semi-official Stockholms-Tidningen, March 9, 1961

Soviets Know Addresses of All Baltic Refugees in Sweden

By Karl Olof Hedström

Lately it has been observed that different organs in the Soviet Union have pursued intensive propaganda against the Balts; those refugees living in Sweden have been especially severely attacked. One might ask the reason, as these Balts have been living in Sweden for twenty years. Most of them have acquired Swedish citizenship. There is a very serious background to this Soviet propaganda and there is every reason to follow carefully the trials now taking place in the Baltic states. One might also ask how it is that the Soviets know the addresses of all Baltic refugees in Sweden. Stockholms-Tidningen has turned to a representative of the Balts in Sweden, the Estonian Dr. Erik LAID, Chairman of the Estonian National Foundation, who is of the opinion that he can give a satisfactory explanation to this puzzling propaganda. "I can point to several reasons for this campaign," says Dr. Laid to Stockholms-Tidningen. "The reason is determined by both foreign and internal politics. The Communist offensive in the free world is based, among other things, upon the ignorance of the broad masses about the real conditions behind the iron curtain. Also, those Balts who succeeded in escaping happen to be the last living witnesses of terror acts - witnesses of truth very embarrassing to the Soviet. The Balts are also embarrassing as far as the question is concerned of the incorporation of the Baltic states within the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940, which was against international law. By simply talking about 'voluntary incorporation' it is not possible to explain away a flagrant action of aggression, as long as hundreds of thousands of active eyewitnesses of these assaults are living in the free world. A great many of the Western governments are in fact relying on these witnesses when they refuse in accordance with the law of nations to accept the incorporation of the Baltic states within the Soviet Union. But the Baltic activity in exile is also a source of annoyance to the Soviets as far as domestic politics is concerned. It is not possible to close the borders so hermetically that information about the activities of the Baltic people in the free world is not made known to Soviet Estonia, Soviet Latvia and Soviet Lithuania. In this way the passive resistance against Communism and against russification is strengthened among the people at home. There has been propaganda from the East ever since the refugees started coming to Sweden. But lately it has increased strongly. During the years after the war it was mainly confined to getting as many of the refugees as possible to return home. The refugee was told that his or her escape was considered to have happened by mistake, and that those who returned home would not have to expect any subsequent unpleasant surprises. Special radio programs for this action were sent out over the larger Baltic radio stations. Sometimes relatives and friends spoke over the radio and even national anthems were played. The results were, however, poor. Only a few allowed themselves to be enticed into returning. And yet the propaganda offensive was not discontinued. Only its form and tactics were changed. Ever since the end of the war a committee headed by General MICHAÏLOV and called 'the Committee for summoning home of refugees' has been operating in East Berlin. Gradually it directed its main activity against the

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Balts. Since 1950 the Committee has published an Estonian weekly paper which was first given the rather clumsy name of 'For the return to the home country'. But in 1953 the name was changed to the more clever 'The voice of truth'. This paper is now distributed gratis to most of the Estonian families in Sweden without they themselves having expressed a wish for it. Two things should here be observed by the Swedish public: the Communists in Sweden have an information service and a staff which has made it possible to compile the addresses of more thousands of refugees in different parts of the country. This unwanted Communist paper is one of the Estonian papers in Sweden having the largest circulation. It certainly also reaches some families where it is the only regular paper in the Estonian language in Sweden. This consequence should be pondered upon also by us Swedes engaged in social and economic activities - by those who sometimes hesitate when confronted with requests for contributions to the free refugee papers published in Sweden, which as a rule have very considerable financial difficulties," Dr. Laid emphasized.

Translation by:

M. L. Haijlen-Rylander

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Semi-official Stockholms-Tidningen, March 11, 1961

Soviet Propaganda Directed Against Refugee Leaders

By Karl Olof Hedström

One must ask oneself what the real background is of the severe war crimes in the Baltic states during the occupation. Dr. Erik LAID, the source of this second article, admits war crimes during both the Russian and the German occupation. It is also likely that some few Estonians took part in these activities on behalf of both the Russian and the German rulers. It is not possible for Dr. Laid to tell whether there are any such persons among those specifically named by the Soviet propaganda, as he does not know them all. But he says that he has certainly been able to establish that the vast majority of refugees named by the Soviet press outside the context of the present trial have not in the least had anything to do with the severe crimes of which they are directly or indirectly accused. In an extensive report on real and partly fabricated events the names of persons who possibly are directly or peripherally tied to these events have been mentioned, but a great number of names are also mentioned of persons who have nothing at all to do with the matter. The Communists count coldly upon the fact that if a person is mentioned in connection with a crime this will also lead to his reputation being damaged regardless of how true the statement is. Even if the accusations on the whole fall through from their very absurdity I do not think it would be right to let them remain uncontradicted, says Dr. Laid, since the Soviet propagandists may thereby be encouraged to make new, unjustified accusations. And the Swedish people of course find it easy to give credibility to a political affliction of some Balts. This is because of the cautious attitude some Swedes have towards us Balts. Often there is a quiet wish for the complete assimilation of the Balts in this country, and thus one would get rid of the problem. This is also one of the final goals of Soviet propaganda directed to the refugees. The Soviet endeavors in relation to the Baltic refugees in Scandinavia are an application of the old phrase "Divide et impera", - divide and conquer. Often national overtones are used ~~given~~ in the paper I have mentioned, "The Voice of Truth" - which is a Communist propaganda paper for the Balts. The large masses of the refugees are described as industrious, hard-working persons of sound judgment and deeply interested in the new way of living and social conditions in their home country. But according to the paper they are however prevented in their efforts to get in touch with the home country by a highly corrupt stratum of leaders purchased by American money - the so called 'top-trash'. Endeavors to discredit in all possible ways the stratum of leaders among the refugees in the opinion of their fellow-countrymen have lately been very pronounced in the propaganda aimed at the refugees. It has sometimes been carried on in rather odd forms and in this effort the paper published in East Berlin has been assisted by a weekly paper, "The Home Country," which is published in Tallin and intended exclusively for the refugees. The circulation of this paper in Sweden has however been less than that of "The Voice of Truth" in Berlin. The attacks against the Baltic refugees have been carried on for a long time and sometimes they appear in the form of more special attacks.

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A clear sign of the initiation of a new propaganda attack was the establishing of "The Estonian branch of the Soviet-Swedish Society" in Tallin in 1959. Feeble attempts were also made in order to create a counterpart of this organization among the Estonian refugees in Sweden. About one year ago typewritten appeals were circulated among the Estonians in some industrial Swedish towns for the forming of a "Society of Estonians in Exile" for the purpose of supplying "objective information" from Soviet Estonia. These forces, however, never dared to appear in public and there is reason to believe that the whole initiative came from abroad. Finally, in April 1960, "The Committee for Relations with Estonians Abroad" was formed in Tallin, supported by official Communist circles and leading persons of outstanding culture. The attack against the refugees in the Soviet press last fall was to some extent a reaction to this failure. It was emphasized that a great number of Balts who nowadays belong to leading circles of the refugee organizations had taken active parts in the war crimes in the Baltic states during the last world war. At the same time the same persons were according to the accusations still believed to be organizing murder, espionage and sabotage in different forms in the Soviet Union. Therefore, according to the propaganda, the majority of persons in leading positions in refugee circles in Sweden, the active political opponents of the Soviet Union, should be placed under the ban of suspicion not only by their own countrymen but also by the Swedish public. They are of course endeavoring to capitalize on the fact that most Swedes since the end of the war have detested the war crimes which were inspired by Nazism, Dr. Laid concluded.

Translation by:

M. L. Haijlen-Rylander

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THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS OF ESTONIA ON THE TALLIN TRIAL

During World War II, Estonia suffered both Nazi and Soviet occupation, the latter still going on. Both occupiers have, for political reasons, annihilated vast numbers of innocent people on Estonian territory. Murder as a political weapon must be strongly condemned everywhere and at every opportunity. Every crime of such kind must be proceeded against, in a judicial society, by a court which is independent. The administration of the law must have no motives other than justice.

Since the Soviet authorities, beginning on March 6, have started a trial in Tallin against three Estonians who had served under the Nazi police force during the German occupation (1941-1944), we cannot consider such a trial arranged by occupation authorities, and thus by a party which has been guilty of similar crimes, to be an act by an independent court, either in the legal or moral sense of the word. The same stand has also been taken by the British government, which has refused to extradite one of the defendants in the trial for the reason that this defendant, being a citizen of the Republic of Estonia, does not come under the Soviet Union's jurisdiction. The British note particularly emphasizes the fact that England has never recognized the incorporation of the Republic of Estonia into the Soviet Union.

It is obvious from the document entitled "The Masks Pulled Off," which has been distributed to the foreign journalists summoned to the trial, that a just punishment of the guilty is not the main purpose of the show trial staged in Tallin. This brochure not only mentions the names of the accused but also the names of a number of refugee organizations and private individuals outside the Iron Curtain who have nothing to do with the crimes taken up in the trial. The purpose of this trial is obviously to cast a moral shadow on several leading Estonian politicians who have managed to escape both from Nazi and Soviet terror and now in the free world have contributed, by means of their public activities, ^{to} disclosing the policy of violence of these two totalitarian regimes, thus including that of the the Soviet Union.

The undersigned central organizations of Estonia and the politically and socially active Estonians who have joined our ranks have, ever since 1940, kept the free world informed of all the crimes and the violations of human rights that have been committed on Estonian territory by both Nazi and Soviet occupiers. The Estonian people would certainly feel a deep satisfaction if the acts of violence committed by these two occupying powers could be investigated by a competent international institution. At present, when the Soviet Union itself has taken up the matter, by arranging a one-sided trial in Tallin, the time should be opportune also to take up those violent deeds committed by the Soviet Union in the Baltic States, so that these actions

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could be condemned by the whole world.

For example, the Soviet authorities in Estonia have liquidated the following Presidents: Konstantin PÄTS (President in 1940), Jaan TONISSON (the President who visited Stockholm officially in 1928), Ants PIIP, Fr. AKEL (who was Estonia's Minister in Stockholm from 1928 to 1934), Kaarel EENPALU, Jaan TEEMANT, Jüri JAAKSON, Johan KUKK and Otto STRANDMAN. Estonia's Commander-in-Chief, General Johan LAIDNER, has also been liquidated as well as 32 actual or former members of the government and 119 members of parliament. Nor has there been any investigation so far regarding Soviet mass murders in Kose near Tallin, in Tartu and Viljandi.

By means of trials like the one in Tallin, the Soviet authorities are trying to turn the world's attention away from their own countless political crimes in the Baltic States. At the same time, the trial in Tallin forms a new stage in the Soviet Union's propaganda offensive against Scandinavia and the entire free world which, because these countries have granted asylum and tolerated the activities of the refugees, are now branded as accessories in crimes in which neither the refugees themselves, nor their generous hosts, have ever participated.

August Rei
Chairman of the Estonian
National Council

Aleksander Warma
The Estonian Committee

Eerik Laid
Chairman of the Estonian
National Foundation ✓

Sender: Arvo Horn, Bureau Chief,
The Estonian National Council
Arsenalsgatan 1-III Tel. 20 60 88

Translation by:

E. M Gröndahl

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